

**HELP ?**

## "Road rage" versus reality

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### **Abstract:**

*"Road rage" is a media coinage that rests more on the infectious appeal of alliteration than on the weight of evidence. The lack of data supporting the existence of road rage as an epidemic is discussed.*

### **Full Text:**

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### **[Headnote]**

A media coinage that rests more on the infectious appeal of alliteration than on the weight of evidence

ROAD WARRIORS: AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS TURN FREEWAYS INTO FREE-FOR-ALLS, read the headline of an Associated Press article in the Chicago Tribune last year. "Armed with everything from firearms to Perrier bottles to pepper spray and eggs," the text began, "America's drivers are taking frustrations out on each other in startling numbers." Newsweek warned, "ROAD RAGE: WE'RE DRIVEN TO DESTRUCTION." In January of this year Time declared, "It's high noon on the country's streets and highways. This is road recklessness, auto anarchy, an epidemic of wanton carmanship." Earlier USA Today had spoken of "AN 'EPIDEMIC' OF AGGRESSIVE DRIVING," and the Washington Times also reported, "HIGHWAY VIOLENCE SAID TO BE SPREADING LIKE AN EPIDEMIC.

The media couldn't talk enough about the awful carnage. Even a piece by the columnist William Safire, on the death of Princess Diana, was titled "ROAD RAGE IN PARIS."

By July of last year matters had become so serious that Representative Tom Petri, of Wisconsin, called hearings before the House Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, which he chairs. "It's a national disaster," Jeff Nelligan, a committee staff member, said. "It's making our roads some of the most dangerous places in the country." By the end of May there were about 200 citations on the Nexis media database that used both "epidemic" and "road rage." In fact, there's been a tremendous proliferation of the term "road rage" itself. It was, apparently, coined in 1988, and appeared in up to three stories yearly until 1994, when it began to catch on. After twenty-seven mentions that year the numbers escalated sharply, to almost 500 in 1995, more than 1,800 in 1996, and more than 4,000 in 1997. Headlines notwithstanding, there was not-there is not-the least statistical or other scientific evidence of more-aggressive driving on our nation's roads. Indeed, accident, fatality, and injury rates have been edging down. There is no evidence that "road rage" or an aggressive-driving "epidemic" is anything but a media invention, inspired primarily by something as simple as a powerful alliteration: road rage. The term was presumably based on "roid rage," referring to sudden violent activity by people on steroids. The term, and the alleged epidemic, were quickly popularized by lobbying groups, politicians, opportunistic therapists, publicity-seeking safety agencies, and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The most frequently cited evidence that Americans have been killing and maiming one another at record rates was a study from the American Automobile Association Foundation for Traffic Safety, released in

March of last year. More than 260 references to the AAA study soon showed up on Nexis.

"ROAD RAGE: UGLY INCREASE IN ACTS OF FREEWAY FURY," from the San Francisco Chronicle, was a representative headline. The study, however, was quite possibly a measure more of perception than of reality.

To conduct it, AAA commissioned Mizell & Co., of Bethesda, Maryland, a consulting firm that collects criminal statistics. The study purported to show an increase of about 60 percent in what it termed "aggressive driving" from 1990 through 1996 (if the rate applicable partway through 1996 held constant). Although Mizell never used the inflammatory term "road rage," he did pour rhetorical fuel on the fire, saying, "What used to be just two people screaming at each other is now one person losing it and pulling the trigger."

The study has numerous problems. Consider that the 218 deaths Mizell claimed were directly attributable to aggressive driving occurred in a period during which 290,000 people died in traffic accidents. He identified 12,610 people whose injuries were attributable to aggressive driving out of a total of 23 million people injured by vehicles. And the survey was hardly scientific. Rather, Mizell simply drew on stories from about thirty newspapers, reports from sixteen police departments, and insurance-company claim reports. He didn't even demonstrate that the changes in his numbers from year to year were statistically significant. Couldn't an increase in the number of incidents reported simply reflect increased awareness of and publicity for aggressive driving, along with an explosion in the use of the term "road rage"? Mizell essentially dismissed this idea both when I interviewed him recently ("We would have picked up on this") and in his report, where he called the influence of such factors "almost certainly not significant."

David Murray, the director of research at the Statistical Assessment Service, in Washington, D.C., doesn't buy it. Once a phenomenon picks up a label, he explains, the label tends to be applied to more and more things. "We find it everywhere," Murray says. "There has always been a degree of aggression while driving, but what did we used to call it? Nothing. Now that we have a name, we look for things that seem to be similar and build a pathology." Stuart Kirk, a professor in the School of Public Policy and Social Research at the University of California at Los Angeles, concurs. "You get an epidemic by the mere coining of a term," he says. What's more, Murray suggests that Mizell's sources-reporters, police departments, and insurance adjusters-influence one another.

Circularity also affects polls indicating that people believe that aggressive driving is on the rise, which are often cited by safety advocates as evidence that it is. One poll, taken in August of last year, found that 74 percent of Americans surveyed believed that other people were driving more aggressively than they had been five years earlier. A few months later another poll showed that Americans considered AIDS to be one of the nation's top two health problems, even though it was actually the No. 8 killer and AIDS deaths and the number of new cases are declining. Those being polled were merely reacting to an image of AIDS with which they had been presented.

USA Today in May of last year quoted Bob Wall, a traffic-safety coordinator for the Fairfax County, Virginia, police department who speaks on the issue around the country, as saying that aggressive driving is "becoming a national epidemic." Powerful words. "But how do you know this?" I asked Wall. "You can talk to just about any police agency in the country," he said. "Every time I go somewhere they are talking about aggressive driving."

I asked Wall if he had any evidence beyond what the police thought. He referred me to an employee in the Traffic Safety Program at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, whose comments

have to go without attribution because the NHTSA press office wouldn't let her speak on the record. She candidly admitted that although aggressive driving is "a newly emerging issue," "no data" indicate an actual increase in it. "Not here and not anywhere," she emphasized. "Aggressive driving" is "just a term," she explained, with "no fixed definition." "There's no law against anything called 'aggressive driving,' and therefore no tally to look at, as with speeding tickets," she said. "You have to have something to mark."

If road rage were increasingly a problem, shouldn't it show up in an increase in highway fatalities? Political appointees at the NHTSA—as opposed to those who actually collect and analyze the data—claim that it does. Ricardo Martinez, the head of the NHTSA, told Petri's subcommittee, "After years of steady decline, the total number of highway deaths increased slightly in each of the last four years." He added that in 1996 there were 41,907 highway fatalities in the country, an increase from the year before.

But those numbers don't take into account additional drivers or miles driven. During the period in which the AAA survey found a 60 percent increase in aggressive-driving accidents, deaths on American highways actually declined, to 1.7 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. In 1987, the year before "road rage" first appeared on Nexis, the rate was 2.4. This decline is not explained merely by the greater use of seat belts and air bags. In 1987 there were 2.8 passenger-car crashes per 100 million miles traveled. In 1996 the figure was only 2.0. For both these categories the numbers are now the lowest they have been since the NHTSA began keeping records.

As for injuries, in 1990, the first year of the Mizell data, there were 151 per 100 million miles traveled. By 1996 the number had slipped to 141. Preliminary NHTSA data for 1997 show that motorvehicle deaths, crashes, and injuries all declined in absolute terms, despite an increase in vehicle miles traveled of about two percent.

None of this is proof that no increase has occurred in the number of deaths or injuries attributable to road rage. After all, improvements in auto safety may have more than compensated for increases in road-rage casualties. But it's clear that authorities are being disingenuous when they claim that casualty data are worsening.

Still, aggressive driving does cause some accidents. At Petri's subcommittee hearings Martinez claimed that "one third of these crashes and about two thirds of the resulting fatalities can be attributed to behavior associated with aggressive driving." The media accepted this claim without question: "TEMPER CITED AS CAUSE OF 28,000 ROAD DEATHS A YEAR" (The New York Times); "TWO-THIRDS OF ALL AUTO DEATHS BLAMED ON STRESSEDOUT, AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS" (the San Francisco Examiner); "SEETHING MOTORISTS MAKE CARS WEAPONS" (the Albany Times Union). But was there any truth to the figure of 28,000? Liz Neblett, a spokeswoman for the NHTSA, responded quite candidly. "We don't have hard numbers," she said, "but aggressive driving is almost everything. It includes weaving in and out of traffic, driving too closely, flashing your lights—all kinds of stuff. Drinking, speeding, almost everything you can think of, can be boiled down to aggressive driving behaviors." With such a broad definition, Martinez could conceivably label virtually every accident as the result of aggressive driving.

Originally "road rage" meant one driver acting against another. No longer. By last year it had come to include a Washington, D.C., bicyclist who shot the driver of a car who ran into him, and a Scottish couple who threatened a driver with a knife after his BMW ran over their dog. The definition of "road rage" now requires neither a road nor rage. One newspaper published a story about developing pristine land under the headline "ROAD RAGE HAS TAKEN TOLL ON WILDERNESS," and USA Today discussed people angry about their insurance premiums under the headline "DRIVERS FEEL 'ROAD

## RAGE' OVER HIGH INSURANCE RATES."

Driving behavior that was once called something else is now called road rage. Thus a British insurance firm recently conducted a poll in which, it claims, "almost one in two state they have either been a victim of or a witness to an act of 'Road Rage.'" But the primary roadrage act was "verbal abuse," the second largest category was "hand gestures," and the third was "intimidatory driving." Attacks on vehicles or people were rarely reported.

The shortage of evidence that aggressive driving is increasing hardly keeps some "experts" from providing reasons why it is. John Larson, a psychiatrist at Yale University, in his testimony before Petri's subcommittee divided aggressive driving-or "vigilante behavior," as he called it-into four degrees, with "road rage" the highest and "highway madness" just beneath it. One of the causes Larson listed for road rage was sportsbeing "strongly imbued with the sports model, either from high school, college, or professional sports; and from identification with sports heroes, who become introjected models for behavior." Another lay in the make of the car itself. "Often aggressive drivers will 'deduce' the motivation of the other driver from the make of his car," Larson told the subcommittee. "BMW's, pickup trucks, sports cars, or off-road vehicles may be given aggressive motivations. . . . Thus aggressive drivers react to the 'personality' they associate with the make and model of the vehicle, not the person inside it." Larson even indicted "Ford Tough" and similar advertising slogans.

**Arnold Nerenberg**, a clinical psychologist in Whittier, California, invokes evolution. "This competitiveness on the road is similar to what you see in all social mammals," he told one reporter. "There is this 'I will not let you get ahead of me.'" Nerenberg is the nation's expert on the causes of road rage-or, perhaps, the guru. He dubs himself "America's RoadRage Therapist," and has his own Web page ([www.roadrage.com](http://www.roadrage.com)). He has testified before the Petri subcommittee, has appeared on the CBS Evening News, CNN, Fox News, The Today Show, 48 Hours, and Johnnie Cochran, and has been featured in Newsweek, USA Today, U.S. News & World Report, People, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and various women's magazines. Nexis shows more than 100 citations for him on the subject of road rage. His *Overcoming Road Rage* can be ordered in book, audiotape, or video format. Originally Nerenberg sold it through a PR firm, using the toll-free number 1-888-ROADRAGE. But the firm has since folded, and now he sells it directly from his office, without benefit of the catchy phone number. Personal sessions can be arranged with him, during which, among other things, according to the Web magazine Salon, he accompanies his patients in the car and throws "screaming fits to demonstrate how crazed and unattractive they appear."

Nerenberg says that occasionally expressing anger behind the wheel is normal. "What's abnormal," he told Salon, "is when it goes beyond muttering to screaming and other aggressive actions." But to hear him tell it, not having road rage is abnormal. He claims that more than half of drivers have "road-rage disorder." Sometimes he describes this as "basically a maladaptive reaction to an identifiable psycho-social stressor that interferes with social functioning." When he wants to be understood, he calls it "one driver expressing anger at another driver . . . at least twice a year."

Nerenberg has his own road-rage statistics. During a CNN interview he said, "Fifty-three percent of our population has a road-rage disorder," and 1.78 billion "episodes" occur each year. "That's based on the fact that on average drivers manifest road rage twentyseven times a year, and we have about a hundred and twenty-five million cars on the road." Nerenberg considers road rage a "mental disorder and a social disease," and proposes that it be included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association.

While roads become slightly safer each year, traffic accidents remain a leading cause of death in this

country, and disproportionately so among the young. But the fuss over aggressive driving and road rage distracts us from those behaviors that could be controlled with relatively minor investments, greatly reducing deaths and injuries. In recent years Americans have waged a fairly successful campaign against drunken driving. But a poll in March of last year, commissioned by AAA Potomac, showed that 48 percent of those surveyed identified "aggressive drivers" as their chief concern, whereas only 28 percent so identified drunk drivers. What happens to the drunken-driving campaigns now that road rage has become our greatest fear?

Clearly a major factor in American road deaths and injuries is that it is ridiculously easy in this country to get a driver's license-to drive a couple of tons of metal capable of going more than 100 miles per hour. Vehicle crashes are by far the leading cause of death for those aged fifteen to twenty-four. According to NHTSA data for 1995, drivers aged twenty and under suffered sixty-seven fatal accidents per 100,000 licenses. For those twenty-one to twenty-four years old the rate dropped to forty-seven, and for those twenty-five to thirty-four it was thirty-three. In the 1960s and 1970s virtually all high schools had some form of drivers' education. According to AAA, it has been eliminated in about half the schools.

One behavior that apparently has become truly epidemic is the running of red lights. Drivers who run red lights cause a quarter of a million traffic crashes a year, according to a study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety that was released in May. The Department of Transportation has determined that crashes at stoplights increased by 14 percent in the period 1992-1996, with the number of fatal crashes at stoplights increasing by 19 percent. A handful of cities are installing cameras at stoplights. And it's working. During the first six months after cameras were mounted at four San Francisco intersections, the number of drivers who ran red lights there dropped by 42 percent. Although some (including members of the California Assembly who fought unsuccessfully to stop the expansion of that state's three-year experiment with cameras) say these smack of Big Brother, the cameras take only single shots of the license plates of violators. A Harris poll in May found that Americans favor them by two to one. How many more lives could be saved and injuries prevented if we focused on behaviors that cause accidents, rather than on media creations like road rage? \*

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**HELP ?**

## Make their day

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### Abstract:

In an interview, psychologist **Arnold Nerenberg** discusses the phenomenon of road rage, why this trend is on the rise and whether or not the behavior has gender at its heart.

### Full Text:

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#### [Headnote]

Fury at the wheel turns frustrated drivers into outlaw Dirty Harrys with a rage for revenge

In Salt Lake City, after a fender bender, one driver guns her engine and runs over the other-fatally. In Santa Cruz, Calif, a man who tailgated is shot dead by the offended tailgatee. In Massachusetts, a driver flashes his high beams at another motorist. When the two come to a stop, the slower driver steps out of his car and fatally wounds the would-be passer with a crossbow.

American Automobile Association figures suggest that episodes of driver-to-driver violence-acts of so-called road rage-are up more than 50 percent since 1990. Arnold Nerenberg, a Whittier, Calif, psychologist who treats patients who can't control their anger behind the wheel, has drawn some general conclusions. "I stumbled into road-rage therapy when I was giving marital counseling to a woman who said, 'You know, the thing that really upsets me about my husband is that he turns into an absolute lunatic behind the wheel. He becomes very ugly, very negative, very vengeful, and I can't stand it.' I started investigating and discovered that road rage is very common. "

In July, Nerenberg, a 56-year-old father of seven, testified before a congressional hearing looking into aggressive driving. He has also published a booklet, *Overcoming Road Rage: The 10-Step Compassion Program*. He spoke with PEOPLE'S Cathy Free.

Exactly what is road rage?

It's where one driver lets another driver know that he or she is angry because of something that the other driver did. In expressing that anger, the driver might make obscene gestures, scream, honk, put on the brakes, cut in front or brandish a weapon. Or even use the weapon.

What prompts road rage?

Within the human psyche there's an urge to release our aggression on an anonymous "other" when we feel justified. While driving, that can occur when someone cuts us off, tailgates, grabs a parking space, blocks the road by driving slowly or directs their rage at us over what they perceive to be our driving errors.

In particular, why are people so quick to get angry while driving?

### **[Photograph]**

**Caption:** "Road rage has always been here," says psychologist Arnold Nerenberg (right), who helps clients put the brakes on their anger.

The keys are anonymity and a feeling of power. The person driving might be a small guy who would never get into a fight, but here he is in a huge truck or a big car. He feels invincible. He feels he can strike and run away very quickly. A car, like a gun, is a great equalizer.

Is there really any difference between now and, say, 20 years ago?

The difference is that today road rage is more frequent and more intense. Road-rage murders are happening all over the country. One thing that makes the problem worse is that we have more Americans arming themselves. Millions of us illegally carry loaded weapons. The more guns in cars, the greater the chance they'll be used.

Why is road rage on the rise?

A simple reason is that roads in metropolitan areas are more congested. More people, more cars, more delays during the commute, more frustration. In the past 15 years, as more women have entered the workplace, families have gone from one car to two cars, even three. Additionally, many people say they are feeling more stress in their daily lives-there's more divorce, child-care issues in two-career families, less job security. You've got someone who may feel powerless and frustrated in many aspects of their life and now they're behind the wheel of a 3,000-pound vehicle.

How many lives are lost because of road rage each year?

That's a problem. Nobody knows. There are scores of high-profile cases that make news. But you never hear about, and can't measure, situations where a driver is distracted by anger or aggressive behavior-their own or another driver's-and winds up crashing a car.

Is road rage a gender issue?

Not really. Based on my preliminary research of about 585 interviews, 45 percent of road-rage incidents are committed by women, and 55 percent are committed by men. It appears that men are doing most of the shootings and women are doing most of the ramming.

How does a driver recognize that he or she may have a problem?

Well, if you brandish a weapon, you have a big problem. But if you flip people off more than twice a year or you shout at them and beep your horn or flash your lights more than twice a year, I'd say you have a problem.

What's the best way to handle your on-road anger?

First, you have to say, yes, I have a road-rage problem. Then, instead of honking your horn or rolling down the window to yell at another person, cuss at him under your breath. I had one person tell me he cursed at people in foreign languages. It's fine to be angry, but don't communicate it. You'll live to drive another day.

Did road rage exist before cars?

I think so. Think about the story of Oedipus, in ancient Greece. He's walking along a road and encounters a royal carriage. They tell him to get out of the way. He won't. They argue. He kills everybody in the coach. And, as we all know, that was only the beginning of Oedipus's problems.

**[Photograph]**

**Caption:** In Cincinnati, Tracie Alfieri (far right) received an 18-month sentence after angrily slamming on her brakes, resulting in an accident that caused Rene Andrews (below), who was pregnant, to lose her baby.

**[Photograph]**

**Caption:** In Cincinnati, Tracie Alfieri (far right) received an 18-month sentence after angrily slamming on her brakes, resulting in an accident that caused Rene Andrews (below), who was pregnant, to lose her baby.

**[Photograph]**

**Caption:** In Cincinnati, Tracie Alfieri (far right) received an 18-month sentence after angrily slamming on her brakes, resulting in an accident that caused Rene Andrews (below), who was pregnant, to lose her baby.

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*Controlling Road Rage:  
A Literature Review and Pilot Study*

*Prepared for the*

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

By

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June 9, 1999

The InterTrans Group

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### 3. Reported methods to prevent road rage

#### a. Education

Many public and private organizations have launched education campaigns to teach drivers about their own behavior and how to deal with aggressive behavior of other drivers. For example, education campaigns have been developed by government agencies such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, by the National Safety Council, and by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Citizen groups, such as Citizens Against Speeding and Aggressive Driving, and insurance companies, such as State Farm and Allstate, have also launched education campaigns (45)(11).

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration provided funding for the Smooth Operator project in the Washington National Capital region. This includes an intensive public awareness campaign with distribution of educational materials, self-tests, and public service announcements. A companion effort will study enforcement techniques. Citizens Against Speeding and Aggressive Driving, active in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region, is focusing efforts on public awareness and citizen involvement in transportation legislation. The National Safety Council has developed a widely used driver education curriculum for aggressive driving offenders (20). The subject of driver education is discussed more completely in Section H.

The media is a willing partner in educating the public about aggressive driving and road rage. Radio and television public service announcements, such as the ones developed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety and by the Colorado State Patrol, are popular ways to increase public awareness. In a local example, the Nashville Tennessean provided readers with a list of alternate routes to ease driver frustration and reduce road rage incidents during construction (38).

Determining the independent effect of these educational efforts is complicated by the simultaneous use of other methods for combating aggressive driving. For instance, it is difficult to separate out the impact of education from that of enforcement or self-help materials.

#### b. Increased Enforcement

Enhanced law enforcement is another method to combat road rage at the regional, state, and municipal levels. Common enforcement methods include using unmarked cars, plain-clothes police officers, helicopters, airplanes, video cameras, motorcycles, radar, and non-conventional vehicles. Pooling resources across jurisdictions appears to be an effective strategy. One such multi-jurisdictional effort, the "Smooth Operator" campaign, involves 15 separate organizations in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia (49).

Program evaluations of these efforts seem promising however most have been conducted by the implementing organizations themselves. Maryland's enforcement program, which is combined with a public information campaign, is said to have reduced the state's fatality rate by 22 percent since 1995 (49). Pennsylvania's TAG-D

program reportedly resulted in a 24 percent drop in total crashes including fatalities (46). Since 1995, San Francisco's STOP program has reportedly resulted in an 80 percent reduction in crashes involving injuries and a 44 percent reduction in hit-and-runs (26). A report released by New Jersey State Attorney General Peter Verniero claims an 18 percent reduction in traffic fatalities throughout the six-county area selected for enhanced enforcement activity (9). New York's Campaign Safe and Sober reports that 6,805 aggressive driving moving violations were recorded during the week of August 6-11, 1997. However, the impact of this operation on fatalities and crashes was not available (23).

Notwithstanding the glowing results just reported, the effectiveness of enhanced enforcement is difficult to distinguish from other efforts. In addition, most evaluations are done in-house, so it is possible that favorable outcomes reflect the implementing organizations' perceived need to demonstrate success. Moreover, the results generally do not distinguish true road rage incidents from other types of incidents. Consequently, extrapolation on the effectiveness of increased law enforcement from these incidents is difficult.

### c. Self-help Methods

Self-help methods, using a variety of media, are aimed at helping drivers increase their driving awareness, reduce personal stress levels, and thereby avoiding aggressive driving. Self-help methods include tapes; books; seminars; classes in anger management; surveys and self-tests.

An audiocassette produced by Dr. John Larson, for example, is intended to reduce stress levels through relaxation techniques and breathing exercises. Dr. Larson is also the author of a book that includes a driver stress profile to educate readers on causes and remedies for roadway anger (32). Dr. Leon James has posted an extensive listing of self-help materials on his Internet Web site at [www.aioha.net/~dvc](http://www.aioha.net/~dvc). Psychologist Arnold Nerenberg offers an 18-page road rage "10-Step Compassion Program" designed to combat "road rage disorder" that includes visualization techniques for drivers (27). The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has developed the video "Preventing Road Rage: Anger Management for Drivers." This video teaches motorists about anger management and provides advice for avoiding conflicts with other drivers (1).

Seminars and classes in anger management are provided by numerous organizations, and self-administered and face-to-face surveys are available. In Ontario's enforcement program, officers of the Provincial Police provide roadside counseling and administer surveys to drivers who appear aggressive. The United Kingdom's Department of Transport is providing a laminated, glove box-sized card that provides motorists with advice on how to avoid stressful situations and what to do when they are encountered (53). Similarly, the Coalition for Consumer Health and Safety (CCHS) in the U.S. has distributed wallet-sized cards for drivers that list courteous driving tips (57). Informational brochures and publications are widely available from a number of organizations, both public and private.

#### d. Increased Penalties for Offenders

Legislation introduced in 1998 to address aggressive driving focused primarily on its definition as an act distinct from reckless driving, and most of the bills included provisions for the classification of offenses and their penalties. These included higher fines, mandatory driver education and re-education programs and penalty points assessed to drivers' licenses. Mandatory jail time, loss of license, and insurance penalties were also proposed in some states. Finally, many states also allow law enforcement officials to send warning letters and radar camera photos to offenders.

Only Arizona has enacted statutes that allow for increased penalties to drivers found guilty of aggressive driving. The state has not yet released an evaluation of the effectiveness of the new laws.

#### e. Call-in Cellular and Other Telephone Systems

A number of telephone hotlines allow citizens to report aggressive driving incidents directly to local law enforcement officers. Special cellular telephone numbers and other motorist call-in programs have been introduced in a number of jurisdictions (8). However, with at least 23 "magic" numbers nationwide, motorists may be confused about which number to call (see Appendix A).

Most areas do not have enabling legislation allowing citations to be issued solely based on a citizen complaint without a supporting observation from a law enforcement officer. This does not diminish the popularity of aggressive driving hotlines, however. Colonel David Mitchell of the Maryland State Police reports that the special toll-free number established for Maryland drivers to report aggressive drivers receives about 300 calls a day (34).

#### f. Intelligent Transportation Systems and Photo Enforcement

Red light runners and speeders are captured on camera in some domestic jurisdictions as well as in some European countries and Australia. The Maryland State Police are developing a new photo imaging technology that will capture aggressive driving incidents (48). This method makes it possible to detect traffic violators without the physical presence of a law enforcement officer. One study of New York's camera program concluded that compliance with the law was significantly improved during the three-year pilot program (3). However, before using this type of automated enforcement, enabling legislation must usually be passed. Privacy, distribution of ticket revenue, ticketing procedures, and the effectiveness of enforcement are common issues (61). In addition, if violations are detected but not enforced the credibility and effectiveness of enforcement suffers (58). Using cameras looks promising given its documented effectiveness in detecting and deterring other types of violations.

g. The Internet

The World Wide Web contains abundant resources for those wishing to increase their awareness about their own driving behavior, as well as those wishing to publicize instances of aggressive driving and road rage that they have encountered. Resources include "Report it" Web sites, driver improvement pages and self-assessment quizzes. The Iowa Department of Transportation's Internet Web site, for example, includes an informational section on road rage that provides a list of common roadway irritants as well as tips for drivers (54). One Canada jurisdiction, the Township of King, has provided a form for citizens to file complaints (51).

The Internet also provides an excellent means of distributing bibliographic and reference lists. Examples of reference lists dedicated to the topics of aggressive driving and road rage are provided by the Center for the Advanced Study of Public Safety and Injury Prevention at the University of Albany and by the Washington State Library (2)(52).

h. Driver Education

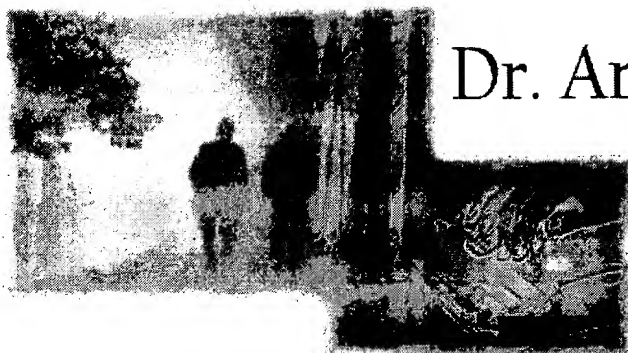
Driver education may be required for all potential licensees, or for the rehabilitation of traffic offenders. School or defensive driving programs may be more specifically focused to include segments on aggressive driving. Many of these programs are voluntary. New York's Point and Reduction Program, for example, offers New York drivers a 10 percent annual auto insurance reduction for attending defensive driving class (25).

Virginia is the only state that has enacted specific legislation to address aggressive driving through driver education. During a House Subcommittee hearing on Surface Transportation in July 1997, it was stated that a 1994 Massachusetts study of the effectiveness of the National Safety Council's Course "Attitudinal Dynamics of Driving" was very effective. The evaluation of the course for drivers facing license suspensions in Massachusetts, Mississippi, and New Hampshire indicated a 70 percent decrease in crashes and violations among those drivers in the following year.

i. Other Countries

Countries besides the U.S. and Canada are also addressing road rage, including England, Australia, Ireland, Japan, Scotland, and New Zealand. Approaches to the problem vary, reflecting the different cultural norms of the implementing countries.

For example, Japan's Ichihara Prison was founded to punish dangerously irresponsible drivers, such as those guilty of vehicular homicide, drunk driving, fleeing the scene of an accident and other crimes. Strict by western standards, it boasts a recidivism rate of only 7% (13). In Australia, Police Minister Russell Cooper has drafted legislation that would allow for up to two years jail term for road rage perpetrators and Victorian magistrates are seeking the power to suspend licenses and require driver re-education for drivers convicted of road rage offenses (57)(29). Most countries, however, are still in the process of evaluating the extent of the problem. New Zealand's Transport



# Dr. Arnold Nerenberg

## Parental Respect and Family Life

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There's a simple reason Dr. Arnold Nerenberg has become one of the nations' most popular commentators and experts on family relationships and parenting: He isn't afraid to push the envelope and consider revolutionary – and sometimes controversial – psychological approaches. With a fearless commitment to explore potential ways to alleviate emotional turmoil and the erosion of parent-child relationships, he has looked beyond traditional psychological approaches and developed brand new therapies, many of which are astonishingly effective.

One of the most controversial and effective therapies Dr. Nerenberg developed is "Death Visualization" therapy. Originally developed as a tool to promote parental respect among teens, Death Visualization involves the use of an actual coffin. Out-of-control teens are led through intense counseling and then prompted to visualize their mother or father in the coffin. The process has proven remarkably effective at getting kids to appreciate what they have before it's gone. Dr. Nerenberg has also used Death Visualization with positive results in the treatment of drug abusers, aggressive drivers and abusive spouses.

Other cutting-edge psychological approaches developed by Dr. Nerenberg include the "Power Thought" technique and "Tattoo Therapy," both of which improve the effectiveness of traditional counseling by reinforcing positive thoughts and corrective behaviors. While other parenting "gurus" have provided complex therapies and extensive treatises on parenting and family

relationships, Dr. Nerenberg has cut to the core of the problem and crystallized powerful methods in simple, non-threatening ways. His revolutionary approach to parenting, for example, focuses on the simple issues of quality time spent as a family, unconditional love and unconditional respect.

As a clinical psychologist Dr. Nerenberg has treated thousands of individuals, couples and families – all part of his commitment to save the family unit and restore healthy relationships. He is unlike any other mental health professional, and his results are unmatched.

To purchase Dr. Nerenberg's unique parenting, relationship and life-improving books and products, [click here](#).